

CANADIAN WOMAN BECOMES FIRST FEMALE OFFICER IN ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATION

July 8, 1996 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) -

In early June, Claire Elgersma became first elected female officer of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). The vote was 24 supporting, 8 opposed, with 5 abstentions. Elgersma, elected to the position of First Clerk, the third-ranking office in the REC, is a member of the Community Christian Reformed Church in Kitchener, Ontario. The REC is an "ecumenical organization representing 30 Calvinistic denominations with 5 million members worldwide" (United Reformed News Service, June 5, 1996).

"I regard her as a woman of great ability," said Rev. Arie Van Eek, executive secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. "She will raise important questions about ecumenical relations between denominations.

In 1995 the Christian Reformed denomination voted to allow each of its "classes" (areas of ecclesiastical jurisdiction) to decide whether to approve the ordination of women as pastors, elders, or evangelists. Elgersma's church is a member of Classis Huron, which determined in March (1996) to join 13 other classes which have approved female ordination thus far.